

Testimony to the Connecticut General Assembly's Human Services Committee
In support of HB 6616
Public Hearing March 10, 2022

I am writing **in support of HB 6616** An Act Concerning Expansion of HUSKY Health Benefits to Those Ineligible Due to Immigration Status.

My name is Barbara Edinberg and I live in Fairfield. **I strongly support HB 6616.** This bill would expand HUSKY coverage to adults up to the age of 26 who meet current income eligibility rules, no matter where they are born, nationality, or immigration status.

Health care is a human right. It is critical that Connecticut residents have access to health care, including dental and mental health care. I thank the State Legislature for expanding HUSKY for undocumented children 0-12 last year. That was an important first step. But we can't stop here. Connecticut future depends on healthy families and a healthy workforce. To ensure that this state has a thriving workforce, it must enable all its residents have access to health coverage.

Connecticut needs a viable plan that ensures that HUSKY is expanded to all immigrants, including children and adults. Research shows that without health care coverage, individuals face significant barriers to care and are likely to have unmet health needs. Those without health insurance are more likely to delay health care until there is an emergency, frequently requiring more expensive and extensive treatment. When they have health insurance, people with chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart conditions, are more likely to seek care early, preventing more serious conditions. Research tells us that children do better when their parents have health care coverage.

As a state, we need to work towards a long-term solution to health care access and extend HUSKY to **all** Connecticut immigrants of any age, those who are parents and those who are not. All children and adults in Connecticut must be able to access the health care they need if we are to ensure a healthy and strong Connecticut.

I support **HB 6616 and expanding HUSKY coverage to income-eligible persons up to age 26 regardless of immigration status.** I urge the members of the Human Services Committee to support and pass this critically needed legislation this session. I also urge the Committee to continue to work towards a long-term solution and open access to HUSKY to **all** immigrants, regardless of age and immigrant status.

Thank you,
Barbara S. Edinberg
Fairfield, CT